Experiment 57

Ropes prepared according to Experiment 48, 53-55 were used as endline in the state of Maine for the lobster industry for two years. No whales have been killed. In some configurations, a short piece of floating rope was used between the end trap and the weak rope to keep the weak rope off the bottom. In other configurations, the weak rope was tied to the end trap in a lobster trawl.

The invention being thus described, it will be obvious that the same may be varied in many ways. Such variations are not to be regarded as a departure from the spirit and scope of the invention, and all such modifications as would be obvious to one skilled in the art are intended to be included within the scope of the following claims.

CLM What is claimed is:

1. A rope comprising weak fibers for use with fishing gear, wherein the rope has a diameter between {fraction (5/16)} inch and 1.0 inch and breaks less than half the tensile strength of a rope of polypropylene of the same diameter.

2. The rope according to claim 1, wherein the rope comprises fibers comprising 40-60 wt % of polypropylene and a 60-40 wt % filler distributed uniformly in said polymer, said filler having an average particle size under 100 microns.

3. Rope according to Claim 2 in which the filler is barite or barium sulfate.

4. The rope according to claim 1, wherein a rope of 3/8 inch diameter breaks between 600 and 1350 pounds of pulling tension.

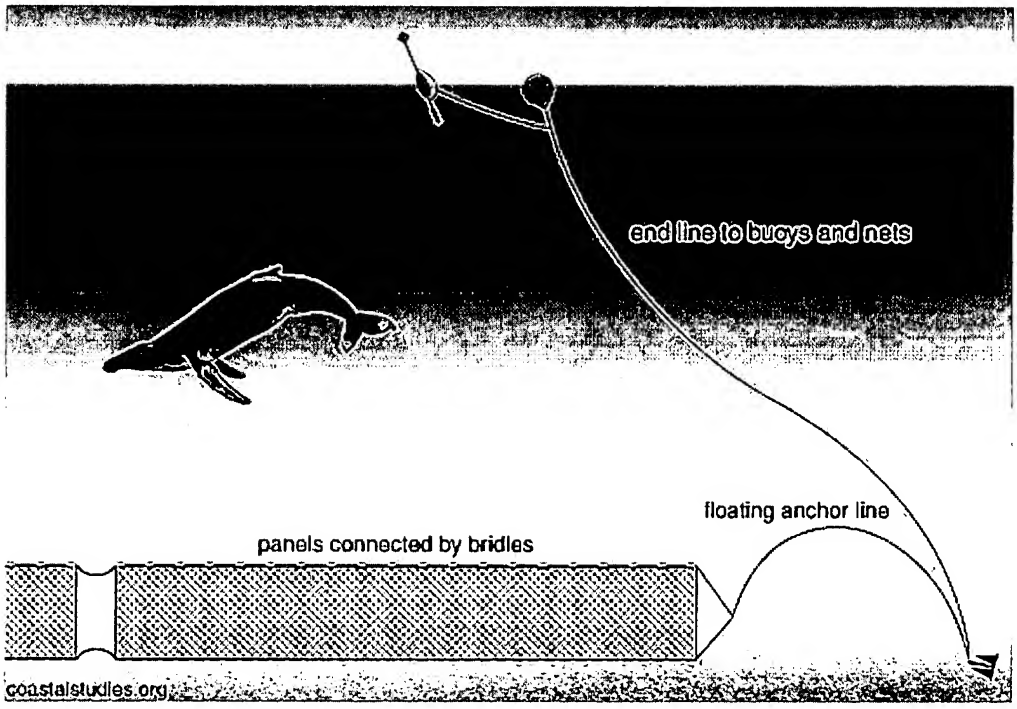
5. A method of reducing deaths in whales and other cetaceans during netfishing comprising a net which incorporates the rope of claim 1 as a head rope or bridle or end line or rope to the high flyer.

6. A method of reducing deaths in whales and other cetaceans during trapfishing comprising an end line rope of claim 1 in which a rope which is attached to a buoy or a weak link near the buoy at one end extend down though the water column to within 20 feet of an anchor or the first trap.

7. The method of reducing deaths in whales and other cetaceans during trapfishing according to claim 4, wherein the traps are used to catch lobster, crab or eel.

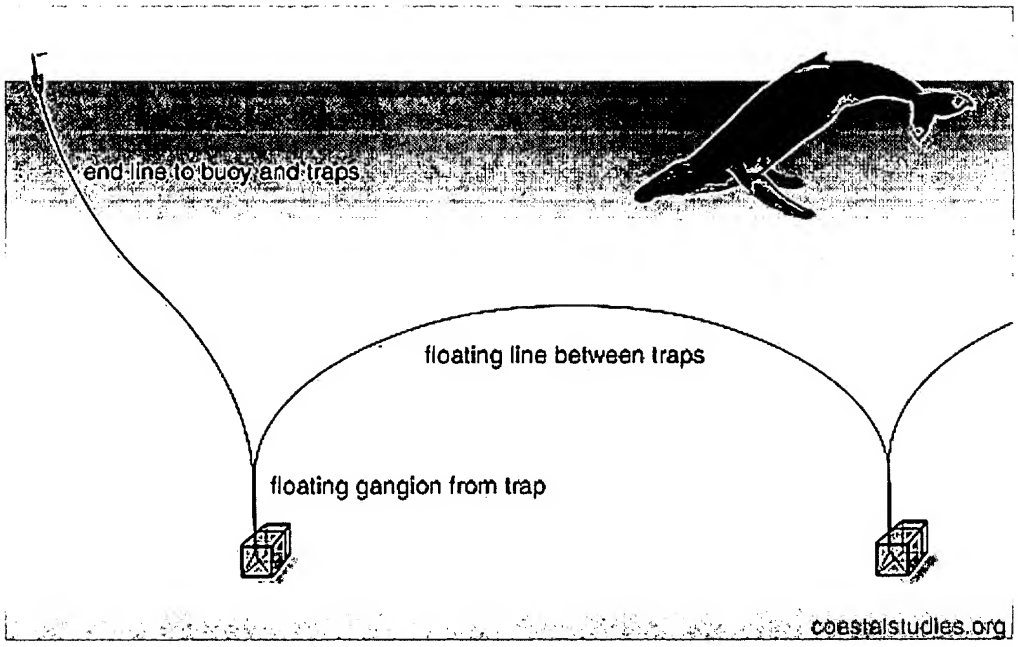
8. A fishnet assembly comprising headrope or bridle or the rope to the high flyer, wherein the headrope and/or bridle and/or rope to the high flyer is the rope of claim 1.

Typical Gear Configuration for Sink Gillnets



1) The headrope is at the top of each net panel.
2) The bridle ropes are those between net panels
3) The end line goes from the anchor to the buoy
4) There is a rope from the buoy to the high flyer

Typical Gear Arrangement for Trap Fishing



1) The end line goes from the buoy to the end trap. The end line must be a sinking rope. To prevent it from scrapping on the ocean bottom, a short section of floating rope is sometimes used between the trap and the end line.
2) The rope between traps is called the groundline. It is not a subject of this application.